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# CAWP Fact Sheet

Center for the American Woman and Politics
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# WOMEN IN MUNICIPAL OFFICE 1990

In **1985**, women comprised **14.3%** of mayors and municipal council members in the states for which data were available.[1] There were **14,672** women elected to these posts out of a total of 102,329 officials. The percentage of women holding municipal and township offices more than tripled from 1975 to 1985, rising from 4% to 14.3%.

The **highest percentages** of women elected to municipal office were found in the District of Columbia (50%) and Hawaii (30%), each of which has only one incorporated municipality. Of the states with a substantial number of available positions,[2] Michigan ranked highest with 27.5% women among its elected municipal officials.[3]

After the District of Columbia and Hawaii, the ten states with the highest pro-portions of women in municipal office (mayors and council members combined) in 1985 were:

| State | % of Women in Municipal Office | State | % of Women in Municipal Office |
|---|---|---|---|
| Michigan[3] | 27.5 | Wyoming | 17.8 |
| Alaska | 23.1 | California | 17.8 |
| Oregon | 22.2 | Arizona | 17.6 |
| Washington | 19.3 | Delaware | 17.5 |
| Connecticut | 18.7 | Ohio | 16.5 |

In **July 1990**, among the **100 largest** cities in the U.S., **16** have women mayors; 4 of these women mayors serve in cities among the 10 largest. In order of city population, the mayors are:

| Rank by Population[4] | City | Name | Party* | Year First Took Office |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Houston, TX | **Kathy Whitmire** | NP | 1982 |
| 7 | San Diego, CA | **Maureen O'Connor** | NP | 1986 |
| 8 | Dallas, TX | **Annette Strauss** | NP | 1987 |
| 9 | San Antonio, TX | **Lila Cockrell** | NP | 1975-81/1989 |
| 24 | El Paso, TX | **Suzie Azar** | NP | 1989 |
| 35 | Pittsburgh, PA | **Sophie Masloff** | D | 1988 |
| 44 | Charlotte, NC | **Sue Myrick** | R | 1987 |
| 47 | Virginia Beach, VA | **Meyera Oberndorf** | NP | 1988 |
| 49 | Sacramento, CA | **Anne Rudin** | NP | 1983 |
| 53 | Fresno, CA | **Karen Humphrey** | NP | 1989 |
| 54 | Tampa, FL | **Sandra Freedman** | NP | 1986 |
| 58 | Corpus Christi, TX | **Betty Turner** | NP | 1987 |
| 60 | Mesa, AZ | **Peggy Rubach** | NP | 1988 |
| 76 | Riverside, CA | **Terry Frizzel** | NP | 1990 |
| 84 | Stockton, CA | **Joan Darrah** | NP | 1990 |
| 95 | Spokane, WA | **Sheri Barnard** | NP | 1990 |

* NP indicates mayoral election is nonpartisan.

In June 1990, of the 879 mayors of U.S. cities with populations over 30,000, **140**, or **15.9%**, are women.[5] Of these women mayors, **31**, or **17.0%** serve in the 182 U.S. cities with populations over 100,000. In July 1990, of the 324 Black mayors serving nationwide, **70**, or **21.6%**, are women.[6] In 1989, **22**, or **12.5%**, of the 176 Hispanic mayors were women.[7]

Among the 30 women serving in the **U.S. Congress** in 1990 (2 in the Senate and 28 in the House), **6** previously served on municipal councils. They are: Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD); and Representatives Barbara Kennelly (D-CT), Jill Long (D-IN), Jan Meyers (R-KS), Susan Molinari (R-NY), and Mary Rose Oakar (D-OH).

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[1]Includes data from the District of Columbia. States for which data are incomplete and therefore not included are: IL, IN, KY, MO, PA, WI.

[2]Other states with fewer than 100 incorporated municipalities are: NV, 17; RI, 39; DE, 56; AZ, 76; WY, 91; NM, 96.

[3]Michigan is the only state in which clerks and treasurers are included in these figures. They are elected ex officio to the councils and vote on policy matters before those bodies.

[4]According to 1986 data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

[5]Adjusted United States Conference of Mayors June 1990 figures.

[6]Adjusted National Conference of Black Mayors figures.

[7]National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials figures.

**A note to users of our fact sheets: Please credit the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), National Information Bank on Women in Public Office (NIB), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.**

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Seattle, WA was the first major city to elect a woman mayor. **Bertha Landes**, who had served as president of the city council, was elected mayor of Seattle in 1926.[1] The largest U.S. city yet to elect a woman mayor is Chicago, IL, where **Jane Byrne** (D) served from 1979-1983. Past women mayors elected to serve among the 100 largest cities have included:[2]

| City | Name | Party* | Years Served |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austin, TX | **Carole McClellan** | D | 1977-1983 |
| Chicago, IL | **Jane Byrne** | D | 1979-1983 |
| Cincinnati, OH | **Bobbie Stern** | NP | 1975-76/78-79 |
| Garland, TX | **Ruth Nicholson** | NP | 1988-1990 |
| Hartford, CT | **Ann Uccello** | R | 1967-1971 |
| Honolulu, HI | **Eileen Anderson** | D | 1981-1985 |
| Huntington Beach, CA | **Norma B. Gibbs** | R | 1975-1976 |
| Huntington Beach, CA | **Ruth Bailey** | R | 1984-1985 |
| Lincoln, NE | **Helen Boosalis** | D | 1975-1983 |
| Little Rock, AR | **Lottie Shackelford** | NP | 1987-1988 |
| Long Beach, CA | **Eunice Sato** | R | 1980-1982 |
| Oklahoma City, OK | **Patience Latting** | D | 1971-1983 |
| Phoenix, AZ | **Margaret Hance** | R | 1974-76/78-80 |
| Portland, OR | **Dorothy Lee** | R | 1949-1952 |
| Richmond, VA | **Eleanor Sheppard** | NP | 1962-1964 |
| Richmond, VA | **Geline Williams** | NP | 1988-1990 |
| Sacramento, CA | **Belle Cooledge** | NP | 1948-1949 |
| St. Petersburg, FL | **Corinne Freeman** | R | 1978-1985 |
| San Francisco, CA | **Dianne Feinstein** | D | 1978-1988 |
| San Jose, CA | **Janet Gray Hayes** | D | 1974-1982 |
| Seattle, WA | **Bertha Landes** | NP | 1926-1928 |
| Spokane, WA | **Vicki McNeill** | NP | 1986-1988 |
| Stockton, CA | **Barbara Fass** | NP | 1985-1990 |
| Toledo, OH | **Donna Owens** | R | 1983-1989 |
| Worcester, MA | **Sara Robertson** | D | 1982-1983 |

*NP indicates mayoral election is nonpartisan.

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Elected in 1887, **Susanna Salter** of Argonia, KS was the first woman mayor in the United States; she was paid one dollar for a year of service.[1]

The first Black woman to serve as mayor of a city with a population over 100,000 was **Loretta Glickman**; she was chosen as mayor of Pasadena, CA in 1982.

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Women have presided over both major national organizations of municipal offi-cials. Four women have served as presidents of the **National League of Cities**: **Pamela Plumb**, Portland, ME Councilor, 1988; **Cathy Reynolds**, Denver, CO City Councilwoman-at-Large, 1987; **Jessie Rattley**, then Newport News, VA City Councilwoman, 1980; and **Phyllis Lamphere**, former Seattle, WA City Council President, 1977. Two women have served as president of the **U.S. Conference of Mayors**: **Kathy Whitmire**, Houston, TX Mayor, 1989-1990; and **Helen Boosalis**, then Lincoln, NE Mayor, 1981-82.

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Data from a 1981 Center for the American Woman and Politics survey of women in elected office show:

- Women mayors and council members are most frequently between the ages of 40 and 59.
- More than half of all women mayors and council members hold jobs outside of the home at the same time they are serving in office.
- Most women mayors and council members who list occupations outside the home are in professional/technical or clerical/secretarial fields. More than 10% of the women municipal officials are elementary or secondary school teachers, by far the most common single occupation listed by the women.
- More than half of all women mayors and council members have had at least some college education.
- More than 3/4 of all women mayors and council members are currently married, and of those, almost all report that their husbands are supportive of their political careers.
- Fewer than half of all women mayors and council members have children younger than 12 years old.[3]

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[1] *Women in American Politics*, Martin Gruberg (Oshkosh, Wisconsin: Academia Press, 1968).

[2] List may be incomplete. U.S. Bureau of the Census data on city population was used to determine the 100 largest cities during the years each woman served.

[3] From a series of CAWP studies entitled "Bringing More Women into Public Office," conducted under a grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation.

# WOMEN MAYORS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBERS: A COMPARISON BETWEEN 1975 and 1985

| STATE | Number of Women Mayors and Municipal Council Members 1975 | 1985 | Percentage of Women (Rank Among States) 1985 | | Percentage Increase from 1975 to 1985 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AL | 85 | 281 | 11.0 | (33) | 230 |
| AK | 35 | 233 | 23.1 | ( 2) | 566 |
| AZ | 39 | 87 | 17.6 | ( 8) | 123 |
| AR | 160 | 365 | 11.9 | (28) | 128 |
| CA | 220 | 465 | 17.8 | ( 7) | 111 |
| CO | 170 | 315 | 16.5 | (11) | 85 |
| CT | 130 | 240 | 18.7 | ( 5) | 85 |
| DE | 22 | 57 | 17.5 | ( 9) | 159 |
| DC | 3 | 7 | 50.0 | ( +) | * |
| FL | 174 | 311 | 13.3 | (19) | 19 |
| GA | 77 | 251 | 7.8 | (40) | 226 |
| HI | 1 | 3 | 30.0 | ( +) | * |
| ID | 45 | 141 | 13.2 | (21) | 213 |
| IL | --- | --- | ---- NA ---- | | --- |
| IN | --- | --- | ---- NA ---- | | --- |
| IA | 304 | 732 | 12.9 | (22) | 141 |
| KS | 165 | 445 | 11.9 | (29) | 170 |
| KY | --- | --- | ---- NA ---- | | --- |
| LA | 65 | 183 | 11.7 | (30) | 182 |
| ME | 87 | 243 | 10.4 | (36) | 179 |
| MD | 59 | 133 | 15.2 | (14) | 125 |
| MA | 48 | 217 | 11.3 | (32) | 352 |
| MI | * | 2,779 | 27.5 | ( 1) | * |
| MN | 227 | 542 | 12.8 | (25) | 139 |
| MS | 82 | 176 | 10.5 | (35) | 115 |
| MO | --- | --- | ---- NA ---- | | --- |
| MT | 57 | 110 | 14.4 | (15) | 93 |
| NE | 83 | 241 | 7.6 | (41) | 190 |
| NV | 2 | 15 | 16.1 | (13) | * |
| NH | 39 | 113 | 10.7 | (34) | 190 |
| NJ | 213 | 451 | 13.2 | (20) | 112 |
| NM | 33 | 86 | 16.3 | (12) | 161 |
| NY | * | 797 | 14.4 | (17) | * |
| NC | 141 | 337 | 12.2 | (26) | 139 |
| ND | 69 | 174 | 8.5 | (39) | 152 |
| OH | * | 1,129 | 16.5 | (10) | * |
| OK | 92 | 312 | 10.2 | (37) | 239 |
| OR | 175 | 344 | 22.2 | ( 3) | 97 |
| PA | --- | --- | ---- NA ---- | | --- |
| RI | 21 | 30 | 12.8 | (24) | 43 |
| SC | 72 | 184 | 12.2 | (27) | 156 |
| SD | 50 | 149 | 8.9 | (38) | 198 |
| TN | 50 | 144 | 7.1 | (42) | 188 |
| TX | 277 | 786 | 12.8 | (23) | 184 |
| UT | 40 | 137 | 11.5 | (31) | 243 |
| VT | 44 | 87 | 6.3 | (43) | 98 |
| VA | 117 | 211 | 13.3 | (18) | 80 |
| WA | 153 | 341 | 19.3 | ( 4) | 123 |
| WV | 120 | 202 | 13.6 | (16) | 68 |
| WI | --- | --- | ---- NA ---- | | --- |
| WY | 34 | 86 | 17.8 | ( 6) | 153 |
| **NATIONAL** | **4,080** | **14,672** | **14.3** | | **260** |

*The number is too small or 1975 and 1985 data are based on different assumptions so comparisons are invalid.

+The District of Columbia and Hawaii are not ranked because each has only one incorporated municipality.

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